

Statement by Montgomery County Councilmember Steven Silverman

Chair, Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

Announcing Biweekly Committee Oversight Sessions on Development Approval Issues

September 6, 2005

As Councilmembers know, the Office of Legislative Oversight is conducting a fact-finding review of the Clarksburg Town Center project development approval and implementation process. In addition, at our last meeting in July, the Council approved a resolution outlining a number of immediate actions that MNCPPC and Department of Permitting Services should take to ensure thorough compliance with approved site plans while more comprehensive reviews of planning enforcement processes are pending. As part of the immediate actions, MNCPPC and DPS are providing biweekly updates to the Council.

In the context of the Shady Grove Sector Plan, some Councilmembers have expressed concerns about acting on the Shady Grove Plan prior to receiving the OLO Report on Clarksburg. The Council President has indicated that we will not take final action on the Shady Grove Plan until after we have received and reviewed the OLO Report.

I want to announce that beginning in two weeks, on September 19, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee (PHED) will conduct biweekly oversight sessions through the fall on actions Park and Planning takes to identify and improve implementation and enforcement of approved residential and nonresidential projects throughout Montgomery County. Among the topics our PHED meetings will review:

- the written biweekly updates/progress reports provided by Park and Planning;
- identification by Park and Planning of any other development approval implementation issues not specifically mentioned in the Council resolution and actions taken by Park and Planning to resolve those issues. New systemic issues, major and minor, may arise in the course of the review of prior approved site plans or through public input, and it will be important for us to learn of them in a timely manner and what steps Park and Planning is taking to address them;
- a review with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and Park and Planning of issues related to implementation of MPDU requirements;
- periodic updates on the implementation of the Clarksburg Master Plan, similar to the quarterly updates the Committee has been receiving on revitalization of downtown Silver Spring, Longbranch, and Wheaton;
- issues raised in the recently released report by the Montgomery County Civic Federation.

I want to thank the Civic Federation for their report and as indicated, I intend to take up in Committee the issues they have raised. I also want to urge any other members of the public who have concerns about compliance issues related to development approvals to communicate them to the Council and my office.

All of us are committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure public confidence in the implementation of the master plans that the Council and public work so hard to adopt for our communities. We will have several opportunities to review and adopt needed long term actions. But there is much that can and will be done in the short term and the PHED committee updates will provide another means for Councilmembers and the public to be informed of those actions.

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